

Applicant: Y. Nitta et al.
Application No.: 09/713,169

REMARKS

The Amendment amends claims 1 and 7, adds claims 8-16, and cancels claims 5-6.
Claims 1-4 and 7-16 are pending.

Re: Minoru (Jap. 11-146083)

Minoru discusses a technique in which line connection for communication and Internet service are used in the case where a telephone number and a URL are associated with each other. In essence, Minoru merely discloses that the telephone number and the URL are associated, and the services for them are used in combination.

Minoru does not show or suggest at least the following claim elements in claims 1-4, and their variants in claims 7-16:

“determination means for determining whether a telephone number and address presence/absence specifying information are added to input data or not”;

“an address acquisition section for acquiring the Internet domain address from a database in which the telephone number and the Internet domain address are associated, in a case where the determination means determines that the telephone number and the address presence/absence specifying information are added to the input data”; and

“wherein the determination means effects line connection for communication, in a case where the determination means determines that the

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address presence/absence specifying information is not added to the input data”.

The claimed invention responds to a request for a communication/telephone service or a request for an Internet access service based on whether or not address presence/absence specifying information is added to an input request. This is achieved by the system automatically determining whether the data is data containing a telephone number only or data in which address presence/absence specifying information is added to a telephone number.

A person who inputs data can use the above services simply by adding, e.g., the asterisk character “*” before or after the telephone number, as address presence/absence specifying information, with a terminal such as a portable telephone, with which alphabetic characters corresponding to a domain name cannot be easily input.

The structure in the present invention which determines whether or not a telephone number and address presence/absence specifying information are added to the input data cannot be derived, even by a person with ordinary skill in the art, from a technique in which a telephone number is simply converted into a URL as in Minoru. This is because Minoru does not show or suggest distinguishing the telephone number and the URL from each other by using a character, i.e., address presence/absence specifying information, in addition to the telephone number.

Furthermore, in the claims, the address acquisition section acquires an address in the case where the determining means determines that the address

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presence/absence specifying information is added to the input data. Line connection for communication is effected in the case where the determining means determines that the address presence/absence specifying information is not added to the input data. Minoru does not disclose that one of the above two services is selected in accordance with whether the address presence/absence specifying information is added to the input data or not.

Based on the above determination, the line connection service and the internet access service can be distinguished from each other. For example, when the user makes a phone call, he inputs a "telephone number," and when he accesses the Internet, he inputs the "*" and "telephone number." In such a manner, the user can selectively request difference services in accordance with whether or not to add "*" to the telephone number; i.e., the difference services are automatically selectively requested in accordance with the presence or absence of "*".

In particular, it should be noted that vision-impaired homepages using voice are becoming more popular. However, it is difficult for impaired users to understand what a URL is, and to master keyboard entry. In the present invention, a URL itself can be grasped with the mark "*" + "telephone number" only, and thus the vision-impaired can also easily input them.¹

¹ In the present invention, "*" + "telephone number" is a mark, not a telephone number, and it is used as a substitution for an Internet domain address. By virtue of this feature, development of business using the system of the present invention will greatly differ from that of business using a conventional system. To be more specific,

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Re: Enzmann et al. (U.S. patent No. 6,687,242)

In Enzmann et al., a number including a special character is displayed from a system side. Then, the user makes a request for the number including the special character, thereby obtaining additional information. Neither the determination means nor the address acquisition section is disclosed in the reference.

For the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the presently claimed invention is patentable over the prior art. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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according to the technical concept of the reference, if information regarding URLs is printed on a telephone book, an URL corresponding to a telephone number can be indicated by adding an identifier (e.g., the term "presence") indicating the presence of the URL corresponding to the telephone number; however, the identifier itself cannot be printed as the URL. This is because even if an item which an identifier indicating, e.g., the "presence", appears is printed on a telephone book, the item itself is not used as a URL.